

U.S. Replies to Charges on Cuba in U.N. General Assembly

*Statement by Adlai E. Stevenson
U.S. Representative to the General Assembly¹*

I had hoped that it would not be necessary to interrupt the general debate, but the utterances of the representative of Communist Cuba and of Mr. Gromyko [Soviet representative Andrei A. Gromyko] today leave me no choice but to also exercise my right of reply, not on all that has been said here, which unhappily follows the pattern of persistent prosecution of the cold war, but with

¹ Made in plenary session on Sept. 21 (U.S. delegation press release 4015).

respect to what has been said about Cuba. The sober 17th session has ended on the fourth day.

I remind the members of the United Nations that, since the attack on Cuba by refugees from Cuba in April 1961, repeated complaints have been brought to the United Nations by Cuba, accompanied by hysterical charges that the United States was plotting, planning, preparing, immediate invasion. One of these complaints, as I recall, was filed in August 1961 but not pressed until 6 months later.² The attack was called imminent in August, but evidently even the Cubans did not believe it. As you know, all of these complaints were dismissed one by one, by overwhelming votes, but only after the expenditure of much time of the delegates and expense to the organization.

From what has been said here, it is apparent that we are going to suffer another sustained assault on our patience and our credulity. I would have thought that there was plenty of useful work to do here without renewing these tired charges.

Mr. Gromyko says that the United States has asserted the right to attack Cuba because it has another system. He says no nation should interfere in the affairs of another. I marvel at the bland hypocrisy of the nation that subverted the wholesome Cuban social revolution to communism, that crushed with tanks the independence of Hungary, that holds in thrall all of Eastern Europe from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Yet he presumes to lecture us on interference in the affairs of others. But as we know only too well, such righteous rhetoric is the standard Communist cloak for the very interference it charges to others.

Now, in direct answer, let me say to the representatives of the Soviet Union and of Cuba that we are not taking and will not take offensive action in this hemisphere; neither will we permit aggression in this hemisphere. For, as the President of the United States made clear last week,³ we and other countries of the Americas will not be deterred from taking whatever action is needed by threat from any quarter. While we will not commit aggression, we will take whatever steps are necessary to prevent the government of Cuba from seeking to subvert any part of this hemisphere. We shall work closely with our inter-American partners, and this intention does not, of course,

² BULLETIN of Apr. 2, 1962, p. 553.

³ Ibid., Oct. 1, 1962, p. 481.

derogate from our right, a right anchored in the United Nations Charter, to protect our vital national security.

The threat to peace in Cuba comes not from the United States but from the Soviet Union. The threat arises from the extraordinary and unnecessary flood of Soviet arms and military personnel pouring into Cuba. It is this foreign military intervention in the Western Hemisphere which is creating grave concern not only in this country but throughout the hemisphere. For what purpose is this great military buildup in Cuba intended? No one can be sure, but all of Cuba's neighbors are justified in feeling themselves threatened and anxious.

If the Soviet Union genuinely desires to keep the peace in the Caribbean, let it stop this warlike posturing, this stuffing of Cuba with rockets, military aircraft, advanced electronic equipment, and other armament all out of proportion to any legitimate needs.

This military intervention from outside of this hemisphere is the threat to which the states of the Western Hemisphere cannot remain indifferent, any more than states could anywhere else.

But I think, Mr. President, the time is long past to graduate—if I can use that word—from this sort of strident talk to address ourselves to the real and urgent business of this General Assembly, which is not propaganda and abuse but peace. The United States will exercise its opportunity to respond to other aspects of the utterances we have heard this afternoon at an appropriate time and place.

Thank you, Mr. President, and my apologies for detaining you.

EXTRACT FOLLOWS

Adlai Stevenson's remarks at the UN 9/21/62

Mr. Wallner - State
Dictated over Phone
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